(b) whether the seal is being given according to the rules of the Weights and Measures Act, 1948, every year;

(c) whether Government would consider to amend the said laws to give that seal after every five years instead of one year as at present; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir. New electronic weighing and measuring machines are used in the trade alongwith conventional weighing and measuring instruments of mechanical or analogue type.

(b) The provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 and the Rules framed thereunder provide for verification period for different type of weight or measure, depending upon the nature of weight or measure, to retain accuracy of measurement.

(c) and (d) In view of the reply stated at (b) above, increasing the period of verification to once in five years will not be in the interest of consumers.

Polio cases

646. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been alarmed over fresh polio cases in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether in the month of December, 2006, thirteen fresh polio cases have been reported in the country taking the total number of children affected with the disease to 610 in 2006;

(c) whether during 2005 only 66 polio cases were reported in the country;

(d) if so, what are the main reasons for emerging fresh polio cases in the country after it was fully controlled; and

(e) the steps proposed to take to check the polio cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) In 2007, Polio cases have been reported from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. There are no polio cases reported from Kerala and Punjab in 2007. Ker. 'a reported the last polio case in the year 2000. Last polio case in Punjab was in 2006.

(b) There were 28 polio cases with onset of paralysis in December, 2006. The total polio cases count in 2006 is 676.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Prior to 2006, there was an outbreak in 2002 when 1600 cases of polio were detected. The four year cycle is due to accumulation of susceptible children during this period. The polio virus survived in Western U.P. and Bihar during the period between 2002 and 2006 and got enough susceptible children in 2006 to start another outbreak. The polio virus survived in Moradabad and JP Nagar due to environmental factors such as high population density, poor sanitation, high incidence of diarrhoea that require more doses of polio vaccine to be given to children in these areas compared to other areas of the country. However, since the overall immunization status of children in 2006 was much better than what it was in 2002, the number of polio cases seen in 2006 was only 676 (compared to 1600 in 2002). The polio outbreak in 2006 started from two districts of West U.P.—Moradabad and JP Nagar, from where it spread to other districts in West U.P., districts of Central and Eastern U.P., Bihar and other States.

(e) The Government has taken the following steps to check the polio cases:

(a) Two nationwide polio immunisation campaigns were conducted in January and February 2007. These were followed by additional sub-national immunisation rounds in the high risk States in March, April, May, July and August, 2007. Additional sub-national immunisation rounds are planned for September, October and December, 2007.

(b) The endemic districts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have had more immunisation rounds in the first six months of 2007 compared to what was done during the corresponding period of 2006.

(c) The mono-valent vaccines have been used extensively in the high risk States/areas during 2007 polio immunisation drives. The mono-valent vaccines have better efficacy than the tri-valent vaccines used earlier.

(d) The Government of UP has filled large number of vacant medical officer positions to strengthen programme management at the block level.

(e) There has been a thrust on involving ASHA workers as vaccinators and mobilisers in the high risk areas to ensure better reach of the polio immunisation drives.

(f) Emphasis has been on reducing the missed children in the high risk areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar by ensuring re-visits of vaccination teams to houses where children get missed during the first attempt by vaccination teams.

(g) All new-borns are being identified, vaccinated and tracked for polio vaccination during the polio immunisation drives.

(h) Migratory population from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in other States like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, West Bengal are being covered every time there is a polio drive in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

(i) Efforts are being made to improve sanitation in the highest risk areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar through the involvement of Ministry of Rural Development.